

The question was could Sister James who had long been a faithful member of the Church, but was a negress receive her endowments. President Taylor talked the matter over with her, but gave her no hope that at present such ordinances could be performed in behalf of the negro race, but promised to consider it. He quoted the scripture that Ethiopia should stretch out her hands to God, but did not think the time had yet come for that race to receive the benefits of the House of the Lord.

While Taylor, as president of the church, had the final word on the interpretation of scripture and the performance of temple rituals, Jane may have been less inclined than others to consider that the end of the conversation. After all, she had worked for both of Taylor's predecessors. She knew that they were human, just like everyone else in the church. And she knew that interpretations could change: she had seen it happen.⁴

Jane also knew better than to put all her eggs in one basket. In addition to petitioning the president of the church, she turned to her stake president, the man charged with leading the congregations in Salt Lake. She received a temple recommend—essentially, a pass to enter the temple—from the president of her stake, Angus M. Cannon, in June 1888. "Mrs. Jane James," Cannon had written in a letter accompanying the recommend, "I enclose you your recommend properly signed, which will entitle you to enter the Temple to be baptized and confirmed for your dead kindred." The letter suggests that Jane had been seeking more than this permission from Cannon. "You must be content with this privilege," Cannon went on, "awaiting further instructions from the Lord to his servants."⁵

That fall, Jane made her way to Logan to do baptisms for the dead. Some eighty miles north of Salt Lake City, nestled in Cache Valley, Logan was the site of the second temple that the Saints completed in the West. No documentation exists to tell us how Jane traveled to and from Logan, who might have accompanied her, nor how long her trip lasted. Perhaps the most convenient mode of transport would have been the railway. Jane could have boarded a train to Ogden at the train depot in Salt Lake, a few blocks north and west of her home. Disembarking thirty-six miles later, she might have lingered in the station for a while before boarding a 4:40 p.m. train to Logan. The train hugged the Wasatch mountains as it made its way north, finally climbing upward and over the summit to drop down into Cache Valley and arrive in Logan shortly after 7:00 p.m. The train was the fastest and most comfortable way to get between Salt Lake and Logan, but it was expensive. Jane may have found another way to Logan: perhaps Sylvester was headed there for business, or perhaps she was able to ride with friends. Traveling by horse-drawn cart or carriage was slower and less comfortable, but the route was very similar. Jane stayed at least

a couple of nights in or near Logan. There were hotels in the area, but it seems unlikely that black people would be welcomed as guests in these establishments, unless Jane was traveling as the employee of a white person. She was a bit old to be working as a domestic servant, but there is a chance that Jane seized an opportunity to visit Logan in exchange for helping a white acquaintance for a few days. Otherwise, Jane probably stayed with friends or acquaintances in the area. Logan was an overwhelmingly white place: the 1880 Census counted no black people in the entire settlement. If Jane enjoyed the hospitality of someone she knew, it was almost certainly someone white.⁶

On Tuesday, October 16, Jane went to the baptistery in the Logan Temple. The temple was a striking stone affair, with creamy white paint that made it stand out against the mountains in the distance (Figure 7.1). Rising five stories, with arched windows, crenellated walls, and a cupola at each end, the building's design recalled both European castles and New England chapels. Unlike the Salt Lake Endowment House, where the baptistery was an addition to the main building, in the Logan Temple the baptistery was at the very center of the building. In the imposing font, which rested on the backs of twelve stone oxen, Jane was baptized six times: for her mother, Philes Manning; her sister, Angeline Manning; her daughter, Mary Anne James; her maternal grandmother, Philes Abbett; her maternal aunt, Dorcas Abbett; and her cousin, Dorcas's daughter, Harriet Abbett. Mary Ann had been baptized before, and Jane's mother and sister almost certainly had as well. Jane may have thought these relatives needed rebaptism because they had left the church.⁷ Jane could not be baptized for her male relatives; a male proxy had to perform that ritual labor. But Jane did not pursue the task of finding and hiring such a proxy, or at least the existing records do not show that she did so. Jane's attentions to the eternal welfare of her female relatives may have reflected a lingering sense of the importance of the women in her family.

As Jane tried to knit her family together in eternity, her earthly family seemed to be unraveling. In October 1885, Jane's oldest son Sylvester was cut off from the church by a Bishop's Court for "unchristianlike behavior." This description covered a wide range of infractions, from refusing to follow the counsel of an ecclesiastical leader to sexual misconduct to breach of contract. For Latter-day Saints, bishops' courts could be a supplement to civil and criminal legal proceedings, but they could also be a substitute for these venues, providing a religious solution for conflicts between church members and ecclesiastical punishments to atone for religious sins. In an 1883 speech, church president John Taylor rhetorically asked his audience, "What are laws for? What are Bishops' Courts and High Councils for?" Taylor answered his own questions: "That when men transgress the laws of God, they shall be tried according to the laws of the Church, and if found guilty, and are worthy of such action, they shall be cast out; that

See Mueller, *Race and the Making of the Mormon People*, 137–38. Elizabeth McHenry's work on antebellum African American writers and readers suggests that the question is actually far more complicated than whether Jane was or was not "literate": reading and writing were less often the solitary endeavors that we might imagine, and far more often community activities that drew in a range of people whose individual abilities to read and/or write might vary widely. See Elizabeth McHenry, "Rereading Literary Legacy: New Considerations of the 19th-Century African-American Reader and Writer," *Callaloo* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 477–82. I thank my colleague Erin Forbes for pointing me to this source. Isaac's signature is found in "In the Matter of the Estate of Jane Elizabeth James, Deceased, No. 5870" (District Court, Probate Division, In and For Salt Lake County, State of Utah).

9. Jane's and Frank's donations are recorded in Minutes, Teachers Meeting, October 14, 1874, in Eighth Ward, Liberty Stake, "Eighth Ward General Minutes" (Salt Lake City), LR 2525 11, LDS Church History Library. The St. George Temple was dedicated on April 6, 1877. Kirk M. Curtis, "History of the St. George Temple" (Brigham Young University, 1964), 92, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=5629&context=etd>; Jane James spoke in the Eighth Ward Relief Society meeting on April 5, 1877. Eighth (Salt Lake City) Ward Relief Society Minute Book "A," 1867–1877, minutes for April 5, 1877, in "Eighth Ward Relief Society Minutes and Records (1867–1969)." For reporting on the dedication of the St. George temple, see, for example, James G. Bleak, "General Conference at St. George," *The Deseret News*, April 11, 1877; "The Conference," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 7, 1877; "Miscellaneous: The St. George Conference in Full Blast," *Salt Lake Daily Tribune*, April 7, 1877. Brigham Young shut the Endowment House in 1876, telling all Latter-day Saints to do temple work in the St. George Temple once it was completed. After Young's death, his successor John Taylor reopened the Salt Lake Endowment House. It remained open until 1889. Devery S. Anderson, ed., *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary History*, Smith-Pettit Foundation Book (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), xxx.

10. Jonathan Stapley, *The Power of Godliness: Mormon Liturgy and Cosmology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 17; Flake, "The Development of Early Latter-Day Saint Marriage Rites, 1831–53," 79, 88–89, 94, 98–99, 101–2.

1. It is important to note that church leaders and members were drawing on racial categorizations that were linked to Biblical lineages. Phenotype—physical appearance, including dark skin—was not the only determinant: many dark-skinned people in Mormon history faced no restrictions with regard to the priesthood or temple access. To use that fact as an argument that the LDS policy restricting the access of people of African descent was not racist, however, is misguided. For discussion and analysis of church leaders working to channel priesthood power away from people of African descent, see Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 106–70, 188–214; Lester E. Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8, no. 1 (1973): 11–68.

2. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet*, 406–7.

Chapter 7

1. Isaac James's location is given in J. M. Sparrow, "United States Federal Census, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, Enumeration District 139" (US National Archives and Records Administration, 1880), microfilm 005162038, Family History Library, Salt Lake City; Frank Perkins appears in S. Suckley, "United States Federal Census, Salt Lake City 8th and 9th Wards, Salt Lake County, Utah, Enumeration District 42" (US National Archives and Records Administration, 1880), microfilm 1,255,337, Family History Library, Salt Lake City; William N. McCurdy, "United States Federal Census, Salt Lake City 13th Ward, Salt Lake County, Utah" (US National Archives and Records Administration, 1880), microfilm 1,255,337, Family History Library, Salt Lake City. Perkins lived with the family of Washington Anderson, whose address is corroborated in Marc W. Anderson, "Memories of My Grandparents" (FamilySearch.org), <https://www.familysearch.org/photos/artifacts/11773712?p=4316647&returnLabel=Washington%20Franklin%20Anderson%20>

(K27T-WZ1)&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.familysearch.org%2Ftree%2Fperson%2Fmemories%2FK27T-WZ1.

- In the 1870 census, both Ellen and Malvina had the last name "James." By the 1880 census, Ellen was gone; Malvina was listed as "Robinson." Robinson was Mary Ann's "married" name and may have been given to Malvina as well to obscure her status as an illegitimate child. By 1880, Mary Ann had died, thus further obscuring Malvina's parentage. In the 1880 census, Jessie was given the last name "James," clearly connecting her to Jane but again obscuring her parentage. D. R. Firman, "United States Federal Census, 8th Ward Salt Lake City, County of Salt Lake, Territory of Utah" (US National Archives and Records Administration, 1870), microfilm 553,110, Family History Library, Salt Lake City; Suckley, "USFC, Salt Lake City 8th and 9th Wards, 1880."
- Jane James to John Taylor, Salt Lake City, December 27, 1884, transcribed in Wolfinger, "A Test of Faith," 148.
- The quotation from the office journal comes from Lester E. Bush, "Blacks and the Priesthood, Textual Excerpts from the George Albert Smith Papers and the Adam S. Bennion Papers, 1859–1954" (Provo), Lester E. Bush Papers, MS 685, box 10, folder 3, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, quoting Gardo House Office Journal for Tuesday, March 20, 1883. Robert W. Sloan, *Utah Gazetteer and Directory of Logan, Ogden, Provo and Salt Lake Cities, for 1884* (Salt Lake City: Herald Printing and Publishing Company, 1884), 480–81, lists eleven people with the last name of Ellis in 1884. The tax rolls for 1883 also list five people with the last name of Ellis. We would expect the tax rolls to have a smaller number of Ellises, because they list only those with sufficient resources to be required to pay taxes.
- Angus M. Cannon, Salt Lake City, to Jane E. James, Salt Lake City, June 16, 1888, transcribed in Wolfinger, "A Test of Faith," 148–49.
- Details about the trip between Salt Lake and Logan come from George A. Crofutt, *Crofutt's Overland Tours* (Chicago: H. J. Smith and Co., 1889), 134–35, 160, 162–63. Details about Logan's population come from Edward N. Rowland, "United States Federal Census, Logan City Precinct, Cache County, Utah, Enumeration District 8" (US National Archives and Records Administration, 1880), microfilm 005162567, Family History Library, Salt Lake City.
- Melvin A. Larkin, "The History of the L.D.S. Temple in Logan, Utah" (Utah State Agricultural College, 1954), 120; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Logan Temple, "Baptisms for the Dead, 1884–1943," 320.
- For Sylvester's excommunication, see Newell, "James, Jane E. M.—Miscellaneous Material." On Mormons' ecclesiastical courts, see Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 261–370. Taylor's remarks came in a speech at Manti, UT, May 19, 1883, reprinted as John Taylor, "Duties of the Latter-Day Saints—How Children Should Be Trained—An Academy for Sanpete—The Kind of Teachers to Select—Education Advocated—Intemperance Condemned—Sin to Be Exposed—Unworthy Men Not to Be Sustained in Office—Example of a Darkened Mind—Providence Over the Saints," in *Journal of Discourses by President John Taylor, His Counsellors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, vol. 24 (Liverpool, England: John Henry Smith, 1884), 171, <http://jod.mrm.org/24/166>.
- For Ellen's and Malvina's presence in Jane's home, see Firman, "USFC, Salt Lake City 8th Ward, 1870." On the identity of "Mrs. Nellie Kidd," see Thiriot, "Mrs. Nellie Kidd, Courtesan." For the San Francisco conviction of Nellie Kidd, see "Untitled (In the City Criminal Court to-Day)," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 28, 1879, Second edition.
- On Jane's property transfers, see Wolfinger, "A Test of Faith," 140, 165n57. That Malvina went to California with Ellen is suggested by a list of letters waiting in the Sacramento Post Office in 1890 that names both Nellie Kidd and "Miss Melvina Jones," whom I believe to be Malvina James. "List of Letters," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, January 27, 1890.
- Eighth Ward, Liberty Stake, "Eighth Ward General Minutes."
- E. E. Frost, Acting Secretary, August 7, 1890, in "Eighth Ward Relief Society Minutes and Records (1867–1969)," 5: 99; Smith, *James v. James*.
- "Old Folks' Day 1891," *Deseret Evening News*, June 19, 1891.